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(54) Title: A SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR LOW BIT-RATE COMPRESSION OF COMBINED SPEECH AND MUSIC
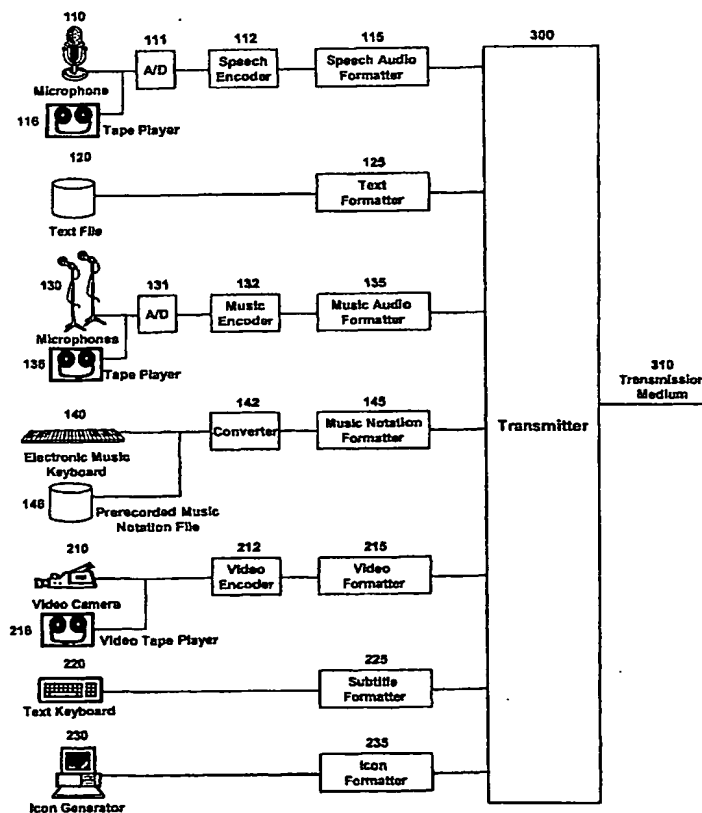
(57) Abstract: A system and method of compressing audio signals (110, 116, 130, 136, 140, 146) which simultaneously contain speech (110, 116), music (130,136, 140, 146) and possibly other audio in such fashion as to reduce the required bandwidth or storage capacity. Audio (110, 116, 130, 136, 140, 146) is transmitted as simultaneous but separate streams of speech audio (110, 116) and music (or other non-speech) audio (130, 136, 140, 146), as well as other streams such as video (210, 216), text (120, 220), computer graphics (230), etc. By keeping the music (130, 136, 140, 146) separate from the speech (110, 116), each can be maximally compressed. By synchronizing these streams (110,, 116, 130, 136, 140, 146, 210, 216, 220, 230), the desired combination can be recreated at the receiver with the user being unaware of the separation. Instead of analog or digital mixing of the music or other non-speech audio (130, 136, 140, 146) with the speech audio (110, 116) to create a composite audio stream (110, 116, 130, 136, 140, 146), the streams are kept logically separate, and, thus, can be optimally compressed using existing technologies.

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